

November 29, 2006

The Honorable Governor Christine Gregoire
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, Washington 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire:

During the November meeting of the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), our members had the opportunity to review the Washington Learns recommendations.

Given previous legislative assignments, the board's comprehensive work plan developed in December 2005, and other initiatives and projects, members feel prepared to tackle assignments specifically directed to the PESB. Attached is the PESB's response to the Washington Learns Report. We look forward to working with you, your staff, and members of the steering committee in meeting the challenges that lie ahead.

Sincerely,



Jill Van Glubt, Chair
Professional Educator Standards Board

Cc: Representative Glenn Anderson
Representative Bill Fromhold
Senator Rosemary McAuliffe
Senator Dave Schmitt
Dr. Terry Bergeson
Victor Moore
Frank Armijo
Charles W. Bingham
Amy Bragdon
Denny Heck
Erin Lui
Bob Watt
Ann Daley

Professional Educator Standards Board Response to Washington Learns Report and Assignments

Build expertise in math and science teaching.

- *Increase math and science course requirements for all prospective teachers.*
- *Ensure that teachers assigned to teach math and science in middle school and high school are prepared to do so.*
- *Provide professional development and training for teachers to use the state curriculum.*

Rationale: *A world-class education system requires teachers who are effective not only in their own subject matter but who also can relate learning to other subjects such as math and science. World-class instruction in math and science requires world-class teachers who are supported and prepared to be effective teachers of the state curriculum.*

Expected results: *More students will meet state academic standards, fewer students will need remedial classes at the college level, more teachers in all subject areas will integrate math and science concepts into their teaching, and more teachers will encourage students in their mathematics and science studies.*

Assignment:

- *The Professional Educator Standards Board, by December 1, 2007, will adopt (1) new math and science knowledge requirements for people entering teacher preparation programs and (2) certification requirements for math teachers in middle and high schools that will prepare them to teach state math and science standards.*

The PESB will:

1. Adopt rigorous and relevant new standards for prospective math teachers

The PESB is already underway reviewing and revising all 33 teaching certificate endorsement competencies, which are the knowledge and skill standards for prospective teachers. The PESB has initiated major changes to the process through which this occurs. To date, the process has relied upon committees of individuals with deep expertise in each subject area. Working with OSPI, to this will be added focus committee's of educators to further refine and ensure appropriate breadth as well as depth. Throughout the development process, new and emerging national and global standards and curriculum guidelines, such as the National Council on Teachers of Mathematics' "Curriculum Focal Points" will be drawn upon for guidance.

2. Align the required subject knowledge test with the new standards

With new endorsement competencies in place, the PESB will also implement an improved subject knowledge assessment better aligned with the new competencies. With time for test development and validation, the PESB expects to have this assessment in place by September of 2008. In the meantime, the PESB will continue to use the current Praxis II subject knowledge assessment, which is used in 25 states and in Washington since 2005.

3. Ensure that Washington students are taught by appropriately-credentialed teachers.

The best systems of preparation and certification are of little impact if educators are not appropriately assigned in the field in which they were prepared and certified. Current rules related to assignment of certified educators provide districts a fair degree of latitude in assignment of teachers. This flexibility has been viewed as essential in a state with large numbers of rural and remote communities with significant difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers for certain subjects, such as math and special education. There are widely varying opinions about the scope of out-of-field assignment in Washington, but the bottom line is, we don't really know. Washington State lacks the ability to collect teacher assignment data related to endorsement or degree. We do know that resoundingly from research that teachers possessing adequate understanding of the subjects they teach is critical to student learning. Yet we also know that the number of districts granting assignment waivers has increased by over 40% since 2000 and that it is a problem nationwide. Recent data collected from school districts in compliance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act indicates that, although Washington's percentage of highly-qualified teachers is quite high, it is in middle-level and secondary mathematics that the most teachers are reported as not highly-qualified.

The PESB is committed to continuing to identify and implement realistic strategies for ending out-of-field assignment. Greater access, opportunity, and system options for educators to become appropriately credentialed must be created statewide to eliminate the necessity for out-of-endorsement assignment.

The PESB will:

- Advocate for legislative support and funding for state data systems that track educator assignment and credentials;
- Limit the renewal of conditional certificates and increase options for conditionally-certified educators to become fully credentialed;
- Time limit existing endorsement-related assignment policies;
- Create more options, access and incentives for educators to gain additional endorsements and advocate for legislative funding and support for pay incentives for teachers who gain additional subject matter endorsements in key shortage areas, such as math; and
- Examine the influence of local hiring practices / local contract agreements related to assignment.

4. Raise standards for state-approved continuing education providers

Current standards for state-approved providers of continuing education (“clock hours”) that are credited toward certificate renewal and salary advancement do not align with what is supported by research about what makes for high-quality professional development. The PESB will adopt new standards and a new process for state approval and evaluation of continuing education providers that will better ensure that teachers have access to high-quality continuing education opportunities.

Attract more teachers of math and science.

Rationale: New more rigorous math and science graduation requirements will require more math and science teachers. Many districts report difficulty filling current math and science teaching positions because they have few qualified applicants. Two existing programs have successful track records. One provides students in college math and science teacher preparation programs a loan to help meet school expenses. The loan is forgiven for those recipients who teach math or science for three years in Washington schools. The second program provides a one-year, hands-on school-based program to prepare non-teaching professionals like engineers or computer scientists for effective classroom teaching.

Expected Results: Increased pool of qualified math and science teachers.

Assignment: The Higher Education Coordinating Board will expand the Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program for teachers who commit to a period of teaching service in Washington, and the Professional Educator Standards Board will expand the Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification Program to all business professionals to be licensed to teach math and science

The PESB Will:

5. **Seek Funding to Expand the Alternative Routes to Teaching Program** overall, with a particular focus on new recruitment strategies for prospective math and science teachers

Since 2002, 191 mid-career professionals have become math and science teachers in Washington public schools through the Alternative Routes to Teaching Program. Early in the program, industry down-sizing and decline of .com companies yielded many candidates. More recent, however, recruiting mid-career professionals as prospective math teachers has become more difficult with overall market demand for individuals with math-related degrees on the rise. The PESB will expand its Route 4 programs, which will allow mid-career individuals with math or science expertise to be employed by a school district under a conditional certificate while that individual is enrolled in the Alternative Routes Program. The PESB will also step-up its overall

recruitment and marketing efforts, as well as work specifically with the business roundtable and specific corporations from whom we can recruit early-retirees.

6. Strengthen the pipeline of prospective teachers that begins with high school students, community colleges and articulation into higher education and educator preparation.

The PESB's biennial budget request includes a pilot program that advances three important priorities for Washington: 1) closing the achievement gap for students; 2) closing the diversity gap in Washington's teacher workforce; and 3) revamping existing future teacher projects aimed at high school students to focus on strategic recruitment to state shortage areas, such as math and science. The PESB will further work closely with the community college system to strengthen articulation between two-year program and baccalaureate degrees and teacher preparation in math and science.

Build cultural understanding of our diverse student population.

Rationale: The students in our classrooms represent the world. A key to better personalizing instruction is to have knowledge of the cultural background of our students and appreciate the richness this brings to learning. This on-going activity builds cooperation among all of us. Many parents and staff in our schools, other than teachers, can help us learn about other places on our planet. We should invite and encourage their participation in our schools.

Expected results: Schools will be more inviting to diverse people, teaching and learning will be more individualized and we will foster greater personal respect among students, staff, parents and the school community.

Assignment:

- *The Professional Educator Standards Board will review teacher preparation requirements in cultural understanding.*

The PESB will:

7. Review State Standards for Approval and Review of Educator Preparation Programs

The PESB is already underway in making fundamental changes to the process by which the Board reviews preparation programs. In addition, the PESB is engaged in a review of the program approval standards themselves. A key component to that review will be ensuring that prospective teachers are gaining the necessary competencies to use culturally responsive instructional strategies to raise academic performance. The process will transition teacher certification from a performance-based system, focused on teacher behavior, to an evidence-based system focused on student learning.

Develop a professional preparation and pay system.

Rationale: In a standards-based educational system, clear expectations are needed for all involved – the staff as well as the students. In Washington we have not been clear about what the standards are for teaching performance. Colleges and universities preparing teachers have requirements about the programs they provide, however each college independently determines if an individual in their program should receive a teaching certificate. The preparation and licensure system should assure teachers have skills and knowledge for world-class teaching. Then, we should compensate these teachers for this performance. This is a major policy shift and will take a multiple-year effort to implement. Additionally our teacher pay system should acknowledge assignments that are difficult, recognize expertise staff bring to their assignments, and reward achievements at school buildings through incentives and rewards. The state should also provide a system through which teachers to continue to develop their teaching skill.

Expected results: Consistent and shared understanding of expected teaching skill; demonstrated competency as a requirement to teach; pay that is competitive and allows Washington to recruit and retain the best teachers; pay that recognizes all that teachers do for kids.

Assignment:

- The Professional Educator Standards Board will set performance standards and develop, pilot and implement a professional teaching level assessment and licensure system based on demonstrated teaching skill.*
- The Professional Educator Standards Board will make revisions to the requirements for college and university teacher preparation programs as necessary to institute the new knowledge and skill based performance system.*
- The teacher salary allocation model will include pay for performance factors.*
- The Superintendent of Public Instruction will design and pilot a professional development delivery system that focuses on state identified teacher knowledge and skills areas.*

The PESB will:

8. Work with the '07 legislature to develop the requirements and funding support for a uniform assessment for the professional certificate

The PESB's September 22nd memo to the Washington Learns Steering Committee described the efforts of the PESB and the Professional Education and Certification Division of OSPI in exploring options for a more uniform statewide measure of a teacher's attainment of Washington's second-tier teaching certification, the professional certificate. The PESB is responsible for administration of the two other state-required assessments for certification, the WEST-B basic skills test and the WEST-E subject knowledge test. We will combine our experience and expertise in implementing these tests with options being explored to assist the legislature in developing legislation that responds to this Washington Learns recommendation.

9. Re-align compensation with state system expectations

Since the policy forum hosted by the PESB in 2003, we have called for state policymakers to address the misalignment that currently exists between our performance-based system of preparation and certification and a salary model based on accumulated credits and clock hours. The PESB will continue to be an active participant in state-level dialogue and planning to better align these systems to ensure the state is appropriately compensating what we value – highly-qualified education professionals.